Take a road trip to Tweetsie Railroad

By ALAN HODGE Special to The Herald

Ready for a ride on a steam locomotive with a holdup to boot?-take a trip to Tweetsie Railroad in Blowing Rock.

Tweetsie is called "North Carolina's original theme park." A unique attraction, Tweetsie has plenty to amuse and thrill both children and adults. Open from May through November, Tweetsie railroad makes any season fun.

The heart of Tweetsie Railroad is the historic Old Number 12 steam engine. This locomotive originally hauled iron ore and lumber out of the North Carolina hills on the ET&WNC line. Locals took the railroad's acronym and made the phrase "Eat Taters and Wear No Clothes" from it to express their condition of poverty. Trains of the railway were known for their shrill whistle- hence the name "Tweetsie."

The ET&WNC operated from the late 1800s until 1940 when rains washed out a large portion of track. Another decade saw the line close down completely. Some of the ET&WNC equipment was sent by the U.S. Army to Alaska, some was moved to Central America, and other bits

ended up on the scrap heap. Saved from these fates by three railroad hobbyists, Number 12 was purchased and moved to Harrisonburg, Virginia and an amusement

park. The park's tracks washed out in Hurricane Hazel two years later and the engine was up for sale

The next person to buy Number 12 was cowboy singer Gene Autry. Incidentally, Autry was also interested in aviation. According to a story told by J.W. Goins of Belmont several years ago, Autry was the first person to break the sound barrier when he power-dived a P-47 Thunderbolt fighter plane at an airport near New York.

Anyway, Autry took delivery of Number 12 with plans to put it in a California park. When that endeavor failed, Number 12 was bought by Tar Heel Grover Robbins in 1956 for \$17,000.

Tweetsie arrived back in Hickory on a standard flat car in May of that year and was greeted by large crowds as well as Governor Luther Hodges. A special "Tweetsie Homecoming" celebration was also held. While the little engine was in Hickory, it was restored at the shops of Northwestern Railway Co.

Number 12 had originally been built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia in 1917 at a cost of \$14,000. It was the last of the original 13 ET&WNC engines to survive. Number 12's dimensions are 54 feet long, 9 feet wide, and 12 feet tall. It weighs 80 tons. Power comes from a boiler 54 inch-

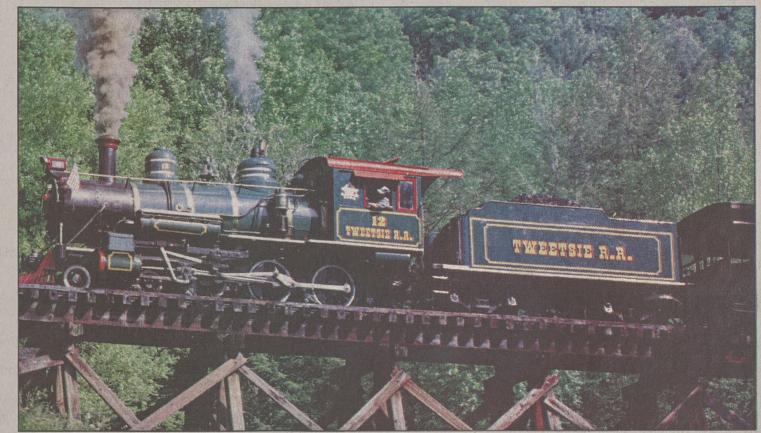


Photo courtesy of Tweetsie Railroad

No. 12 crosses a 225-foot trestle over Dead Horse Creek at Tweetsie Railroad. Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia built the engine in 1917 at the cost of \$14,000. In 1992, the engine was placed in the Naional Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of Interior.

es in diameter. The tender's water tank holds 3,000 gallons and four tons of coal.

July 4, 1957 saw Tweetsie make its first run at the 400 acre park we know today. The tracks had been laid in a three mile circuit at Roundhouse Mountain and had a five percent grade, two deep cuts, and a thrilling 225 foot trestle over Dead Horse Creek.

The Wild West came to Tweetsie in the late 1950s when WBTV rented the park to hold a birthday party for

it's star Fred Kirby. From that beginning, Kirby and his singing cowboy act were a Tweetsie regular until his death in 1996.

Today, Tweetsie offers train rides as well as a wide variety of other features. Attractions range from a railroad museum to carnival rides. There's also a shooting gallery, gold panning, chair lift, deer park, and blacksmith shop.

Other amusements include dancing at the Palace Saloon, arcade

games, antique cars, ice cream, and an old time jail-

Tweetsie Railroad will also be holding a series of special events this year. Western Days are coming May 18-19 with the Saddle Pals reenactors. Come see Thomas the Tank Engine at Tweetsie May 31 through June 9. The mountain sky will light up with Tweetsie's Fireworks Extravaganza on Thursday, July 4. Two weeks later, July 13-14, Tweetsie Railroad will host a Magic

Festival. Look for Grammywinning entertainers Riders in the Sky August 3-4.

Come cooler weather, Tweetsie Railroad will have the famous Ghost Train feature October 3-4, 11-12, 18-19, 25-26, and November 1-

Tweetsie Railroad is located right on Highway 321 between Boon and Blowing Rock. For more information on tickets, schedule, call 1-800-526-5740 or visit the website at www.Tweetsie.com

EARL TINDOL (EARL TINDOL

Don Hong



Chris Champion Brandon Walters Tom Smith







Scott Bynum

















Marty Linder Donna Honeycutt









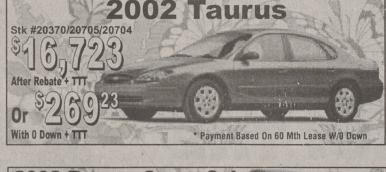






Matthew Hall This Could Be YGU!!

Now Hiring



2002 Ranger Su	iper can
\$दाश निर्श्त ।	
After Rebate + TTT	LAN .
\$40023	
01 104	
With 0 Down + TTT	* Payment based On 60 Mth Lease W/O Do





Used Car Inventory Prices **Have Been Greatly Redu**

	CA	RS	per mo.	
	94 Excel #4615	\$2,988 o	r \$134	95 F-1
	95 Grand Am #46	\$3,988 o	r \$136	99 Ra
	91 240 SX #4691	\$3,988 o	r \$136	01 Ra
	95 Escort GT #37	⁵ 3,988 0	r \$136	00 GMC
	95 Saturn #4484	⁵ 4,988 o	r \$136	00 F-1
1000	99 Escort #3980	\$6,988 o	r ⁵ 143	00 F-1
	98 Taurus #4335	\$6,988 o	r \$151	00 F-1
	98 Cavalier #4347	\$6,988 o	r 151	01 Rang
	96 Altima #4382	\$6,988 o	r 151	99 F-1
	99 Stratus #4286	⁵ 6,988 0	r 151	
	01 Escort #4358	\$8,988 0	r \$142	99 Rang
	01 Taurus #4437	\$12,988 o	r ⁵ 204	01 F-2
	96 Maxima #4603	\$12,988 o	r \$238	99 F-1
	97 Maxima #4492	\$13,988 o	r \$256	98 Ram 3
	99 Infinity 130T #4503	\$13,988 o	r \$250	01 F-250

TRU	CKS	per mo.
95 F-150 #4366	\$9,988	or \$183
99 Ranger #4547	⁵ 10,988	or \$199
01 Ranger #4507	11,988	or \$189
00 GMC Sonoma #4789	⁵ 11,988	or \$189
00 F-150 #4551	⁵ 11,988	or \$189
00 F-150 #4552	11,988	or \$189
00 F-150 #4550	⁵ 13,988	or \$220
01 Ranger SC XLT #4753	⁵ 13,988	or \$220
99 F-150 #4453	⁵ 14,988	or \$255
99 Ranger SC 4x4 #4480	⁵ 15,988	or \$251
01 F-250 #4505	⁵ 16,988	or \$274
99 F-150 #4299	17,988	or \$283
98 Ram 3500 Dually #557	⁵ 21,988	or \$346
01 F-250 Crew Cab #550	⁵ 29,988	or \$471

SUVS	per mo.
93 Voyager #4606 \$3,988 0	r 136
95 Villager #4131 \$6,988 0	r 151
96 Dodge Hi Top #4697 \$9,988 o	r \$178
96 Jimmy #4450 \$9,988 0	r 183
99 Explorer #4501 \$11,988 0	THE RESERVE OF THE PARTY OF THE
99 Ventura #4404 \$14,988 0	
01 Windstar #4313 \$15,988 0	r 3251
99 Explorer #4534 \$15,988 0	r 3251
99 Explorer #4512 \$16,988 0	r \$267
97 4 Runner #4295 \$17,988 0	r \$283
97 Expedition #463 \$17,988 o	r 329
97 Expedition #4778 \$17,988 o	r \$329
99 Town & Country 4755 \$18,983 o	r \$299
01 Escape #4428 \$19,988 0	
01 Explorer #4459 \$20,988 0	r 329
01 Escape #4518 \$20,995 0	r 330
02 Explorer #4311 \$23,988 0	r *377
01 Expedition #449 \$25,988 o	
02 Explorer #4487 \$28,995 0	r 5456

Oh Yeah, That's Us!!!

1901 East Franklin Blvd. 704-867-8341 w.tindolford.com



Before making any car-buying decisions, visit our showroom, where our award-winning staff for service makes buying our Fords a smart choice.